

### III. Public Participation

The process of updating the transportation component to Norfolk's comprehensive plan included public involvement and coordination with City officials, staff and community leaders. These efforts included two City of Norfolk newsletter stories, stakeholder and community questionnaires, a working session with City staff and officials, and a public meeting.

#### Newsletter stories

Two stories publicized the update effort in the City of Norfolk's official newsletter, *City Outlook*. The first was distributed in August 2005 and solicited input on the community questionnaire. The second was distributed in early May 2006 and served as a notice for the May 22 public meeting.

#### Community Questionnaire

A key tool for the early stages of this process was a community questionnaire, which provided the public an early opportunity for input on the update to Norfolk's Transportation Plan. It also has provided the City with general areas of public concern regarding its transportation system. More specifically, the effort has assisted the study team in determining a preliminary list of alternatives that could be evaluated through the travel demand modeling process described in Chapter VI of this report.

#### Background

On June 20 and 21, 2005, community leaders provided input on Norfolk's transportation system by participating in group discussions facilitated by The Schemmer Associates. This effort included the City Council and City Planning Commission. As a part of these discussions, 36 participants completed the questionnaire.

In August and September 2005, the questionnaire was distributed to the general public through the City of Norfolk's newsletter. The questionnaire was also made available electronically on the City website. A total of 95 surveys were submitted (28 via Internet, and 67 via hard copy).

## Questions

The questions included ranking and open-ended formats. The questions are listed below. A copy of the Questionnaire is included in **Appendix 1**.

**1. Norfolk's transportation system affects your quality of life. How would you rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Unacceptable/Very Poor" and 5 being "Acceptable/Very Good"?**

- Congestion on major streets
- Condition of major streets & roadways
- Travel times between places you go
- Public transit system (Handi Bus)
- Street maintenance & repair
- Condition & availability of sidewalks
- Condition, availability & connectivity of trails

**2. If someone asked you to prepare a plan for Norfolk's transportation system, what are the top three actions or projects you would most strongly recommend?**

**3. If you could change one thing about transportation in Norfolk, what would you change?**

**4. What is the best thing about transportation in Norfolk?**

**5. How would you rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of Norfolk's transportation system? (Very Satisfied / Okay / Dissatisfied)**

- Roads/Streets
- Sidewalks
- Intersections
- Handi Bus Routes
- Highway System
- Bike Paths
- Trails

6. What do you feel should be emphasized in the Comprehensive Plan Update regarding transportation? Please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means it should have very little emphasis at all and 5 means the item should be strongly emphasized.

- Planning for widening roads
- Planning for ongoing maintenance and preservation of streets & highways
- Planning for **new** interchanges and **new** roads to respond to future growth
- Planning for safety & traffic flow improvements at intersections
- Planning for more bicycle paths and trails
- Improving bicyclist & pedestrian safety
- Investigate more public transit alternatives

## Synopsis of Results

More detailed results, including graphics, are available in the **Appendix 1** of this report.

### Question 1:

#### Rating of aspects of Norfolk's Transportation System

- Both stakeholders and the general public rated Norfolk's "travel times between places" highest.
- Both groups gave the lowest ratings to Norfolk's "condition and availability of sidewalks" and "public transit system (Handi Bus)".

### Question 2:

If someone asked you to prepare a plan for Norfolk's transportation system, what are the top three actions or projects you would most strongly recommend?

- Stakeholders:
  1. Bypass routes
  2. 25<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Street improvements
  3. Sidewalk improvements
  4. Transit system
- General public:
  1. Transit system
  2. Repair on streets/roadways
  3. Repair/add more sidewalks/connect more trails
  4. Bypass routes

**Question 3:**

**If you could change one thing about transportation in Norfolk, what would you change?**

- Stakeholders:
  1. Bypasses
  2. Parallel parking downtown
  3. Transit system
  
- General public:
  1. Transit system
  2. Return roundabouts to 4-way intersections
  3. Parallel parking downtown

**Question 4:**

**What is the best thing about transportation in Norfolk?**

- Stakeholders:
  1. Travel times/traffic flow
  2. Street conditions/maintenance
  
- General public:
  1. Short travel times
  2. New roundabouts

**Question 5:**

**Satisfaction with the following aspects of Norfolk's transportation system?**

- Stakeholders:
  1. Most Dissatisfaction: Bike Paths
  2. Highest Satisfaction: Roads/Streets
  
- General public:
  1. Most Dissatisfaction: Sidewalks
  2. Highest Satisfaction: Highway Systems

**Question 6:**

**Emphasis in the Comprehensive Plan Update.**

- Stakeholders:
  - Highest emphasis:
    1. Planning for new interchanges/roads to respond to growth
    2. Planning for safety/traffic flow improvements at intersections

- Lowest emphasis
  1. Public transit
  2. Planning for widening roads
- General public:
  - Highest emphasis:
    1. Planning for safety/traffic flow improvements at intersections
    2. Planning for ongoing maintenance and preservation of streets and highways
  - Lowest emphasis
    1. Planning for more bicycle paths and trails
    2. Planning for widening roads

## Working Session with City Staff and Officials

On February 28, 2006, representatives from City staff, City Council and the Planning Commission attended a presentation/work session to determine various alternatives that should be tested in the travel demand model described in Chapter VI. The participants were given the results of the community surveys, a primer on travel demand modeling and a report on the existing and 2030 conditions of the transportation network.

## Public Meeting and Comments

A public meeting was held on May 22, 2006, at the City Council Chambers, with 32 people in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to share with the public the preliminary recommendations of *Transportation Plan 2030* (as described in Chapter VIII) take comments before the Plan was finalized and formally adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council. The meeting included a presentation, displays, handout and comment sheets.

The meeting was advertised in advance through the *City Outlook* newsletter, fliers, and the *Norfolk Daily News* and local radio stations. The local media also provided news coverage of the meeting. The draft *Transportation Plan 2030* was made available at City offices and the public library. It was also made available electronically on the City's website. The public had two weeks to submit comments. A summary of the comments and responses is provided in **Table 3-1**.

**Table 3-1: Summary of Public Comments**

Type	Date	Summary	Response
Public Meeting Question	05/22/06	Why are three-lane roads proposed? Why not four-lanes?	Three-lane roads are considered safer than four-lane roads because they allow a lane for through traffic to continue uninterrupted. Because of this, they have similar capacity to four-lanes.
Public Meeting Question	05/22/06	Are utilities, such as storm drainage pipes, etc. included in the cost estimates?	Yes, however the costs are broad-brushed estimates. More precise costs are determined during engineering design.
Public Meeting Question	05/22/06	Does the Nucor Road area include the industrial growth occurring there?	Yes, and as additional development occurs, it can be incorporated into the travel-demand modeling tool.
Letter from Faith Regional Health Services, 2700 Norfolk Avenue	05/24/06	Disappointed that Norfolk Avenue, from 27 <sup>th</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup> Streets, was not included in the City's plans. Would like it to be narrowed to three lanes and be undivided. This would allow direct access to FRHS and allow a possible bridge connection between the west campus and any future facilities south of Norfolk Avenue.	Discussions continue between FRHS, City and Nebraska Department of Roads. This study took a "macro" view of deficiencies. Additional detailed study will likely be performed to determine if additional improvements are necessary along Norfolk Avenue, between 25 <sup>th</sup> Street and U.S. 275.
Letter from property owner on N. 25 <sup>th</sup> Street	06/01/06	Concerned about change in plans to widen 25 <sup>th</sup> Street closer to his house. Driveway has direct access to 25 <sup>th</sup> Street. Questions need for the project.	City responded with letter. The current recommendation is based on future deficiencies identified through the study effort described in this report. There will be ongoing efforts to keep affected property owners informed.